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Scotsman

4 Dec^r -86

During last winter Miss Mason delivered in Bradford a course of lectures on *Home Education* (2), which she has now given in a permanent form to the public. And it is well that she has done so; for the training which she advocates, with marked ability and ample experience, will be of lasting good to those who adopt it. She suggests a method of education resting upon a basis of natural law; and she touches in this connection upon the mother's duties to her children in the three stages of life during which they fall under her personal training—childhood, school life, and young maidenhood; for it is principally about girls that she speaks. It is with the most sincere deference to mothers that she states her system; because she believes that the woman intuitively sees into her child's character, has the capacity of appreciating its strength and its weakness, and the faculty of calling forth the one and sustaining the other, in which lies the mystery of education, apart from which all its rules and measures are utterly vain and ineffectual. With sound common-sense and resistless argument, Miss Mason points out, not what is practicable (for in hardly two households would the same plans be practicable), but what appears to her absolutely best for the child from an educational point of view. She sets out with the too often overlooked idea that it is nothing short of devilish to give a child a low view of human nature, and the terrible sinfulness of the young. Righteousness is man's true nature, and the child cannot be too soon made to feel that it is a divine duty to hold its character sacred, and to revere its honour. Miss Mason lays down excellent rules for stimulating without straining mental work, as to subjects of study, exercise, nourishment, fresh air, free perspiration, and such like, for the several stages of the girl's life. The observing powers of the young should be excited as soon as possible. They should be made to do some work regularly. And even afterwards, when they go to school, they should enter upon their studies systematically, and not by fits and starts. The moral lessons are excellent; the forming of habits is especially considered, seeing that all habits gather by unseen degrees, "as brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas." Miss Mason's directions, so sensibly and so homely written, will be found of great service to many a mother who would like to do her best to train her young child, especially in country districts, where it is very inconvenient to send it to a distant public school.

23 cm 452

Glasgow Herald Dec-18/86

"Home Education: A Course of Lectures to Ladies, delivered in Bradford, in the Winter of 1885-1886." By Charlotte M. Mason. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. 1886.)—The writer's aim has been "to suggest a method of education resting upon a basis of natural law, and to touch, in this connection, upon the mother's duties to her children in the three stages of life during which they fall under her personal training—childhood, school-life, and young maidenhood." Her intention has been to point out not what is practicable, but what appears to her absolutely best for the child from an educational point of view. Education being an art which has its scientific basis in psychology, the importance of having a rational and verifiable basis rather than one that is unverifiable, becomes obvious. Six lectures are devoted to the education of children under nine years of age. Children being less personal property than public trusts, put into the hands of parents that they may make the very most of them for the good of society, their responsibility, especially that of the mother, is very great; because it is more than anything else the home influences brought to bear upon the child that determine the character and career of the future man or woman. Therefore a parent must follow reasonably a fully thought-out method of education to fulfil the claims his children have upon him. Miss Mason says that a code of education has been expressly laid down by Christ in the Gospels. It is this:—"Take heed that ye offend not—despise not—hinder not—one of these little ones;" and she has three exhaustive sections on offending, despising, and hindering the children. She treats pretty fully of the conditions of healthy brain-activity under the heads of exercise, rest, and change of occupation, nourishment, pure air, sunshine, and free perspiration. She next takes up the "out-of-door life for the children," and enlarges on sight-seeing and picture-painting, flowers and trees, living creatures, field-lore, and naturalists' books, out-of-door geography, out-of-door games, and walks in bad weather. She just lectures overmuch, which is not only pardonable, but what must be expected of a female professional oracle. Some mental and moral habits are next discussed, and then follows a discourse on lessons as instruments of education, in which kindergarten games and occupations are treated of, and the various kinds of lessons usually taught to children, the next lecture taking up the subjects of will and conscience and the divine life in the child. She then passes from children under nine years of age to school boys and school girls, and school discipline and home training for these. The art of reading aloud in the family is insisted on, table-talk being affected by the character of the family reading. Aesthetic culture is discussed, but Miss Mason does not venture to formulate canons of taste. The last lecture is on "Young Maidenhood—the formation of character and opinions."

Brighton Gazette
23/12/86
14 cm 452

HOME EDUCATION.

(London: KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, and Co., 1, Paternoster Square).

The name of Charlotte M. Mason, identified with this work, is sufficient guarantee that it possesses abundant merits. Whatever Charlotte Mason may have to say is always worth hearing or reading, and her course of lectures to ladies delivered at Bradford, last winter, and published under this title, will be found especially instructive and particularly well worthy of perusal.

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Liverpool Mercury
Dec 25. 86.

Home Education, a Course of Lectures to Ladies, delivered in Bradford in the winter of 1885-86. By Charlotte M. Mason. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co.

These lectures, which are all of a superior character, were delivered in Bradford last winter by Miss Mason, who was for some time lecturer on education and teacher of human physiology at the Bishop Otter College, Chichester. The original object the authoress had in view was to popularise and amplify the educational hints contained in some of the chapters of Dr. Carpenter's "Mental Physiology," but the subject grew upon her, and she found it necessary to cover a great deal of ground untouched in that work. A sufficiently complete treatment of home education from her particular point of view she also found to be impossible within the compass of a single volume. Miss Mason tells us that her attempt is to suggest a method of education resting upon a basis of natural law, and to discuss in this connection the mother's duties to her children in the three stages of life during which they fall under her personal training, viz.: childhood, school life, and young maidenhood. With reference to the first of these—the education of children under nine years of age—we have some admirable observations on the conditions of healthy brain activity, out-of-door life for children, the laying down of lines of habit such as "Shut the door after you," obedience, truthfulness, sweetness of temper, and such like, together with kindergarten games and occupations, with a chapter which binds the whole together in a manner every way worthy of the subject, and entitled "The Divine Life in the Child." The authoress next treats of the relations between school life and home life, school discipline and home training. She shows how school is a new experience, advocates a sound physical training as well as one which is intellectual, moral, and religious; has some kindly, common sense observations on the awkward age, and commends the art of reading aloud, as well as poetry, as a means of culture. We regret that the discussion of the training of young maidens at home, with the formation of their character and opinions, is so much abridged as to be comprised within 30 pages, because the lecture which is devoted to the examination of pleasure and duty, pursuits and occupations, objects in life and the value of special training, is one of the best in the book. The authoress says well: "What is to be done with a family of grown-up daughters? It is not enough that they learn a little cooking, a little dressmaking, a little clear-starching. Every one of them should have a thorough recognised training for some art or profession whereby she may earn her living, doing work useful to the world, and interesting and delightful to herself, as all skilled labour of head or hands is. It appears to me that parents owe this to their girls as much as to their boys." We can speak of this book in the highest terms, and even experienced mothers of families may read it to advantage.

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Birmingham Post. Dec 29. 86.

HOME EDUCATION : A Course of Lectures to Ladies, delivered in Bradford in the winter of 1885-1886. By CHARLOTTE M. MASON. [London : Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co.]

These lectures deal with a mother's duties to her children in the three stages of life during which they fall under her personal training—childhood, school life, and young maidenhood. They are sensible and practical, and show a real appreciation of the problems which a mother has to solve. A parent who would study the counsels here given, and carry them out, so far as circumstances permitted, would hardly fail to see rich fruit in the lives and characters of those whom she is privileged to aid in preparing for the journey that leads us all to a common goal.

Reading Mercury

Jan 1 - 87.

LITERATURE.

HOME EDUCATION: A Course of Lectures to Ladies, by CHARLOTTE M. MASON, some time Lecturer on Education and Teacher of Human Physiology at the Bishop Otter College, Chichester. (London: Kegan Paul, Trenchard and Co., 1, Paternoster-square).—Of the making of books about education there has been, since the time of Solomon, no end. It is a subject on which, while the wisest may well doubt their own wisdom, the feeblest are apt to think that they have something to say which the world would be the better for knowing. The author of this series of lectures needs no excuse, however, for entering a field so well trodden. She has scathed herself of the rich harvest of thought and experience of the past, but has, by the way, gleaned new grain and gathered fresh flowers for her readers. She sets forth "a method of education based upon natural law"—education in its widest sense, of which the knowledge desired in school and from books forms but a small part. In the early section of her book, dealing with "The Education of Children under Nine Years of Age," she dwells much upon the need of out-of-door life and the cultivation of the powers of observation in promoting a happy and joyous development of the child's nature. Through the same channels, also, she would instil—not frequently or obtrusively, but rarely and with tender reverence—the earliest lessons in religious truth.

The mother (she says) will point to some lovely flower or precious tree, not only as a beautiful work, but a beautiful thought of God, in which we may believe His finds continual pleasure, and which He is pleased to see His human children rejoice in. Such a seed of sympathy with the Divine thought sown in the heart of the child is worth many of the sermons the man may listen to hereafter, much of the "divinity" he may read. Equally interesting and valuable are the lectures on the formation of habits in childhood as the foundations of moral and physical character. The title of the fifth lecture—"Lessons as Instruments of Education"—sufficiently indicates Miss Mason's point of view, and on the subject of teaching—or rather letting the child teach himself—the elements of reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography she has many suggestive remarks. As an example we may quote her observations on how the child may best acquire his first notions of geography out-of-doors—

A pool fed by a mere cutting in the fields will explain the nature of a lake, will carry the child to the lovely lakes of the Alps, to Livingston's great African lake, in which he delighted to see his children "paddling." In this connection will come in a great deal of pleasant talk about places, "pictorial geography," until the child knows by name and nature the great rivers and mountains, the deserts and plains, the cities and countries of the world. At the same time he gets his first notions of a map from a rude sketch, a mere few lines and dots, done with pencil and paper, or, better still, with a stick in the sand or gravel. "This crooked line is the Rhine; but you must imagine the raft, and the island with the Minster Tower, and the Nuns' Island, and the rest. Here are the hills, with the castles on the top—now on this side, now on that. This dot is Cologne," &c. Especially let these talks cover all the home scenery and interests you are acquainted with, so that, by-and-by, when he looks at the map of England, he finds a score of familiar names which suggest landscapes to him—places where "mother has been."—The woody, flowery islands of the Thames; the smooth Sussex downs, delightful to run and roll upon, with soft carpet of turf and nodding harebells; the York or Devon moors, with bilberries and heather;—and always give him a rough sketch map of the route you took in a given journey.

All this, and much more of the same kind, is very delightful, and it is a happy feature of our times that in the early stages of education it is becoming generally recognised as the natural method. It remains true, nevertheless, that there is no Royal road to learning; much of our knowledge can be acquired only by laborious effort. Mingling with the sunny smiles of childhood there will always be a few tears and wry faces over lessons, be they ever so cunningly contrived. In her remarks on "The will—the conscience—the Divine life in the child," Miss Mason will have the sympathy of most of her readers. Speaking of Bible teaching to children she says:—

The Word is full of vital force, capable of applying itself. A seed, light as thistle-down, sown into the child's soul, will take root downwards and bear fruit upwards. What is required of us, that we should impart a love of the Word; that the most delightful moments of the child's day should be those in which his mother reads for him, with sweet sympathy and holy gladness in voice and eyes, the beautiful stories of the Bible; and now and then, in the reading will occur one of those convictions, passing from the soul of the mother to the soul of the child, in which is the life of the Spirit. Let the child grow so that—"New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven" are a joy to him, too—things to be coveted first amongst the blessings of a day. The concluding sections of the book—which deal with "school life and home training" and with "young manhood and the formation of character and opinions"—contain much that is wise and good, but the limits of our space forbid further quotations. It need only be said that here, as throughout the book, Miss Mason shows that she possesses the prime essential of a successful educator—sympathy with, and love for young life. "If you do not love boys," says that witty Frenchman, "Monsieur O'Reilly," in his latest production, "never be a schoolmaster," and the advice applies, *mutatis mutandis*, even more forcibly to teachers and pupils of the gentler sex. A commendable feature of Miss Mason's book is her employment of physiological and psychological teaching—the latter perhaps a little too much from, we believe of writers—to enforce care of the body as well as culture of the mind. On some of the many details of "home education" and training on which she touches opinions will inevitably differ—and rightly so, for in such matters a dead uniformity is lost of all things to be desired. We cannot doubt, however, that the volume, with its store of matter and illustration, will prove helpful and suggestive to many parents and instructors of youth.

Saturday Review, 18 cm 452
Jan 8/87

Not many books on the training of the young contain so much good sense and sobriety of judgment as *Home Education* (Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co.), a series of lectures to ladies by Charlotte M. Mason delivered in Bradford last winter. The author has a real and firm grasp of an important subject, and her book has definite practical value, which is what cannot be said of nine-tenths of our theoretic literature on the science of education.

The Queen

29 cmc 452

Jan 29th 1887.

Home Education: A Course of Lectures to Ladies, delivered in Bradford. By CHARLOTTE M. MASON. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co.

THE ladies who heard these lectures had an experience of no ordinary character and utility, and we are very glad to see what they heard put into print for the benefit of themselves and of others. The lectures are eight in number, and they embody an unusual amount of information on almost every point suggested by their general title. There is very little omitted which concerns the physical, intellectual, moral, and religious interests of childhood and youth. The fond mother will here see what wise counsellors advise as the proper course of training from babyhood onwards. We are pleased to see that the whole of knowledge and profit is not supposed to be comprised in books and parental admonitions. They may go abroad and learn lessons there, or, as Shakespeare puts it, find "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything." The early out-of-door life is well dealt with, and so are the different habits which begin to be formed so soon. One good lecture is on direct teaching, and one on the conscience, &c., raises some grave questions of responsibility. The lecture on the "Home education of the school boy and school girl" deserves very serious consideration on the part of those whose olive branches are coming to "the awkward age." The final lecture, on "The Training of the Young Maidens at Home" brings us face to face with the crowning cares of home education. The book is one to be read and digested by parents, and it has our cordial commendation.

210cm452
Academy

Feb 19/87

Home Education. By Charlotte M. Mason. (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.) The object of the author of this book is to "suggest a method of education resting upon natural law"—in other words, that shall be reasonable; and we must admit that the suggestions contained in it are marked by common sense. It must not be supposed that the treatment of education here is at all technical, as might be imagined from the term "natural law." Natural may mean anything in nature, as these latter days of popular treatises on this and that too well know. "Home Education" is the substance of lectures given to ladies, and bears in its arrangement the traces of its origin. The first lecture, treating of the general conditions of education, appeals to principles and facts which we are all ready to admit although we may differ as to their relative importance. That children should have exercise, rest, nourishment, pure air, and sunshine, if their brains are to work in a healthy way, may be taken as an axiom. That all the help we can give them may be summed up in the words "offend not, despise not, hinder not," is hardly so immediately obvious. The chapter on outdoor life is excellent reading, but we fear it is, for many, a counsel of perfection. The delights which a country walk may yield are dwelt on lovingly; the thousand opportunities for accurate observation and discrimination of natural objects, landscapes, flowers, trees, and living creatures are eagerly noted. But, we ask, who shall show us these things? Happy is the child who has such a guide, one who has no scorn for games that are noisy and rough, one that allows even climbing. The writer starts with the proposition, "Education is the formation of habits"; and, in dealing with children under nine years of age, very properly relegates lessons to the second rank. The habits of attention, application, and the like are duly insisted on; the virtues of obedience and truthfulness properly recognised. The nature and growth of the will and conscience are, however, treated apart from these—an arrangement by which nothing is gained. In "lessons," if anywhere, we may expect to find fads, but the suggestions about them are, in the main, exceedingly sensible. The author has a righteous horror of mere words and figures and little text-books, and claims the first place in education for eyes, ears, and fingers, and that in the open air. Her religious opinions are pretty clearly indicated. They are, however, marked by charity and toleration; and she is ready to admit the possibility of growth in goodness outside her own creed. The book is pleasantly written, enlivened by illustration and anecdote, and may be safely commended to mothers, young and old. Common sense is its keynote.

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Leeds Mercury
Feb. 23/87

Mothers, and all, indeed, interested in the training of the young, would do well to read earnestly the eight lectures on HOME EDUCATION delivered last winter in Bradford by Charlotte M. Mason (2). They dwell on many important subjects which religious parents are in danger of neglecting while diligently attending to the spiritual interests of their children. If none of the functions of mind are performed without real activity in the mass of grey and white nervous matter called the brain, the important question arises, What are the conditions of healthy brain-activity? The answer is given under the headings—Exercise, Rest and Change of Occupation, Nourishment, Pure Air, Sunshine, and Free Perspiration. Though the brain of a man weighs only a fortieth part of the body, yet a fifth or a sixth of his blood is required for its nourishment. But the body of the child, and in particular the brain, are proportionately more active than the man's, and the child has in addition to grow. Hence the necessity of children being well fed. To secure good air they should be accustomed, we are told, to sleep with at least an inch of open window all through the year, and with much more in summer; and it should be remembered that in ordinary circumstances night air is more wholesome than day air. Whether what is said on the physiology of habit be found correct or not, there can be no doubt about the strange power for good or evil possessed by habits, and the importance, therefore, of labouring to form those that are good. In physical activity the newly-growing muscles themselves take form according to the action required of them. Certain habits of body grow thus into a person and become part of himself, the muscles conforming themselves and growing to the different kinds of action. The author argues that habits not in any sense physical, such as flippancy, truthfulness, order, also make their mark upon a physical tissue, and that it is to this physical effect the enormous strength of habit is probably due. Nor does it seem surprising that the brain should be modified by the work it has to do. "It is as if every familiar train of thought made a rut in the nervous system of the brain into which the thoughts run lightly of their own accord, and out of which they can only be got by a great effort of will." Many mental and moral habits are explained, and directions given for their formation. The chapter on how to secure a vigorous well-disciplined will and a well-instructed conscience merits careful reading. The divine life in the child is next discussed. Among the other subjects found throughout the work are out-of-door life, lessons as instruments of education, the relations between school life and home life, and "the training of the young maidens at home."

The Guardian 5126mcl452
April 13/89

Home Education, by Charlotte M. Mason. (Kegan Paul.)—We have seldom met with a more sound and sensible book on education than this, which contains a course of lectures given to the ladies of Bradford. If they have gone home and acted on them, so much the better for the youthful generation of Bradford. It should be read by every young mother, for it is thoroughly up to the needs of the present time, and though there are a few maxims such as belong to every educational manual, yet these are put in such a fresh light that they do not seem like commonplaces. And in fact, a good many rules that are looked upon as trite have in practice become almost obsolete, so that it is well that they should be revived. One great point throughout the book is the mother's personal work, and the impossibility of delegating it to nurse or governess. The necessity of using such aids is acknowledged—as well as the fact, which experience has proved, that the brain of a very young child may be over-stimulated by spending its whole time with an educated earnest mother—but great stress is laid on the parent's personal influence. Nothing is better than the lecture on conversational teaching upon real things and on opening the child's mind to take interest in actual surroundings, in describing them accurately and finding out for itself all about them. On this the Edgeworths insisted, with, perhaps, a little of the priggishness inherent in Mr. Edgeworth, and though some parents followed it up with great success, the public laughed, and of late years it has become the fashion to sneer at rational instruction in play-hours, and so boys go to school, as Mr. Thrupp finds, not knowing whether a whale lives on sea or land, nor whether a deer is carnivorous! There is excellent advice on the actual humanity of preventing the habit of mooning over lessons by enforcing absolute attention; but we think allowance should have been made for those exceptional cases where a squinting eye or other nervous demonstration proves that the strain of fixing attention is hurtful. The mode of teaching history seems scarcely practical enough. Spending a whole year upon Alfred would leave little time for anything else; a month would be enough for the purpose, and a month is as long in a little child's life as a year is to grown up people; but we quite agree that to learn to love great characters is the right end at which to begin. There is some excellent advice upon family readings aloud, especially in the holidays, when some book of real information and value is recommended, and can be made acceptable by discussion and general interest. The latter part of these lectures assumes the children to be attending day-schools, and gives the judicious counsel that the home lessons should be vigorously studied in as short a time as possible, with the incentive beyond of some standard light literature—best of all Scott's novels—being afterwards read aloud. It is very good advice that before the need begins of keeping up with current literature, nothing second or third rate should be given to the young people; but how this is to be avoided among aunts, god-mothers, and young companions giving and lending on all sides,

the writer does not say. Perplexed mothers may find a great comfort and assistance in the remarks on the damsel just emerged from school. Altogether it is a book well worth study, and full of wise thought and observation.

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Pall Mall Gazette June 13. 87.

"HOME EDUCATION."

"Home Education. Bradford Lectures to Ladies." By Charlotte M. Mason. (Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co.) It is difficult to speak too highly of these admirable lectures. Turn where we will they are full of sound sense, and it would be an excellent thing if every candidate for the holy estate of matrimony could be compelled to undergo a preliminary examination in these excellent lectures before they were permitted to undertake the responsibility of rearing the citizens of the future. Miss Mason modestly says that she only wishes to suggest a method of education resting upon a basis of natural law, and two-thirds of the volume of 277 pages are devoted to the education of children under nine years of age. Her suggestions are sensible and practical. The chapter about "Out-of-door Life for the Children" is excellent, and her observations on lessons as instruments of education are full of useful and suggestive hints to those who wish to awaken the minds of their children rather than merely to load them with dates and facts. Even if we doubt how far nine-year-olds can be taught to enjoy the Venerable Bede, some of whose pages are deadly dull, we heartily concur with the general principle that "to know what there is to be known about even one short period is far better for the children than to know the 'outlines' of all history." The concluding lectures on the training of older children are also excellent, and with all that Miss Mason says about the need of careers for girls every sensible person must entirely concur.

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Spectator

Aug 20. 87.

Home Education. By Charlotte M. Mason. (Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co.)—This volume contains "a course of lectures to ladies," delivered at Bradford. The first six are devoted to "The Education of Children under Nine Years of Age," the seventh deals with "The Home Education of the Schoolboy and the Schoolgirl," the eighth with "The Training of the Young Maidens at Home." It is about girls rather than boys that the author has most to say, though her observations and suggestions are always valuable. We may mention especially the treatment (pp. 214-16) of the difficult question of the disposal of a girl's time. With boys this matter seems to settle itself easily. With girls it requires management, and very careful management. The eighth chapter is peculiarly interesting and instructive. Nothing could be more sensible, as nothing, in our opinion, could be more true, than the conclusion of the whole matter,—that "the girl wants a career, a distinct path of life for her own foot to tread, quite as much as does the boy." If we can only solve the problem of providing this career, many of our social difficulties will disappear.